CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A double clutch assembly comprising:

an abutment assembly having an outer circumferential surface;

a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;

a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;

a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting section extending over said outer circumferential surface; and

a plurality of connecting elements connecting said first connecting section to said outer circumferential surface.

2. A double clutch assembly as in claim 1 wherein said connecting assembly comprises an integrally formed starter ring gear, said first connecting section extending axially from said ring gear.

3. A double clutch assembly as in claim 1 wherein said connecting plate assembly comprises:

a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be connected to said drive element; and

an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

4. A double clutch assembly comprising:

an abutment assembly;

a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;

a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;

a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive element, said connecting plate assembly comprising a radially outer first connecting section which extends axially;

an axial projection formation on said abutment assembly, at least part of said axial projection section axially overlapping said first connecting section of said connecting plate assembly; and

a plurality of connecting elements fixing said first connecting section to said axial projecting section for rotation in common.

5. A double clutch assembly as in claim 4 wherein said axial projection formation lies radially outside of said first connecting section.

6. A double clutch assembly as in claim 4 wherein said connecting plate assembly comprises:

a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be connected to said drive element; and

an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

7. A double clutch assembly comprising:

an abutment assembly having a radially outer area;

a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;

a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;

a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure plate toward said abutment assembly:

a connecting assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive element, said connecting assembly comprising an intermediate connecting ring and a connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting section;

a plurality of first connecting elements fastening said intermediate connecting ring to said radially outer area of said abutment assembly; and

a plurality of second connecting elements fastening said first connecting section to said intermediate connecting ring.

8. A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 further comprising a starter ring gear formed on said intermediate connecting ring.

9. A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein at least some of said first connecting elements and at least some of said second connecting elements are threaded bolts, said intermediate connecting element comprising threaded holes, each of said threaded holes receiving both a first connecting element and a second connecting element.

10. A double clutch assembly as in claim 9 wherein said intermediate connecting ring is a formed metal plate.

11. A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein said first connecting section extends essentially radially.

12. A double clutch assembly as in claim 7 wherein said connecting plate assembly comprises:

a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be connected to said drive element; and

an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

13. A double clutch assembly comprising:

an abutment assembly having a radially outer area;

a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;

a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;

a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting section extending essentially radially; and

a plurality of connecting elements fastening said first connecting section to said radially outer area of said abutment assembly for rotation in common.

14. A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein said abutment section has tapered fastening holes, at least some of said connecting elements having tapered fastening sections which are received in said tapered fastening holes in an interference fit.

15. A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein at least some of said connecting elements have tapered fastening sections which pass through the first connecting section.

16. A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein at least some of said connecting elements have cylindrical sections which pass through the first connecting section.

17. A double clutch assembly as in claim 13 wherein said connecting plate assembly comprises:

a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be connected to said drive element; and

an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.

18. A double clutch assembly comprising:

an abutment assembly having a set of teeth;

a first clutch assembly comprising a first pressure plate;

a first force exerting assembly which can move said first pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a second clutch assembly comprising a second pressure plate;

a second force exerting assembly which can move said second pressure plate toward said abutment assembly;

a connecting plate assembly for connecting the abutment assembly to a drive element, said connecting plate assembly having a radially outer first connecting section with a set of teeth which engage said teeth on said abutment assembly for rotation in common.

19. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said teeth on said first connecting section engage said teeth on said abutment assembly under pretension.

20. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said teeth on said first connecting section have tapered ends which engage in correspondingly tapered gaps between said teeth on said abutment assembly.

21. A double clutch assembly as in claim 18 wherein said connecting plate assembly comprises:

a radially outer part having said first connecting section;

a radially inner part having a second connecting section which can be connected to said drive element; and

an elastic connecting assembly connecting said radially inner part to said radially outer part to permit relative rotational movement.